

Middle East and North Africa

Eastern Mediterranean

➔ **Israel-Palestine** Violence flared in Gaza between Israel and Palestinian faction Islamic Jihad leaving 34 Palestinians dead. In Gaza, militants fired ten rockets into Israel night of 1-2 Nov, one landed in Sderot; Israel same night struck Hamas sites in Gaza leaving one Palestinian dead. Israeli airstrike 12 Nov killed Islamic Jihad senior leader and his wife in Gaza City. In next two days Islamic Jihad launched over 450 rockets and projectiles into Israel (most intercepted or landed in fields) to which Israel responded with airstrikes on Islamic Jihad targets throughout Gaza killing at least 34 Palestinians, including sixteen civilians. Despite Egyptian-brokered ceasefire between Israel and Islamic Jihad that came into effect 14 Nov, sporadic strikes continued. Hamas cancelled weekly protests along Israel-Gaza fence 15, 22 and 29 Nov. Israel 23 Nov shot down drone near fence and Israeli security forces 29 Nov shot dead one Palestinian protester near fence area. In West Bank, EU 5 Nov contributed some \$18mn to Oct salaries and pensions of Palestinian Authority civil servants. Clashes between Israeli security forces and Palestinians commemorating anniversary of death of Yasser Arafat, former leader of Palestine Liberation Organization, 11 Nov left one Palestinian dead near Hebron. U.S. 19 Nov said it would no longer consider Israeli settlements illegal under international law. Thousands 26 Nov demonstrated in cities across West Bank against U.S. policy change, dozens injured. In Israel, following elections in Sept, parties continued attempts to form coalition govt but to no avail. Israel's attorney general 21 Nov indicted PM Netanyahu on corruption charges. In Syria, Israeli airstrike targeting Islamic Jihad member in capital Damascus 12 Nov killed at least two. Following Israeli airstrikes on Iranian targets in Hama and near Palmyra, suspected Iran-backed forces 19 Nov launched four rockets from Syria toward Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, all intercepted. Israel next day launched airstrikes on Iranian and Syrian positions in and near Damascus leaving at least 23 dead.

➔ **Jordan** Around 400 activists 3 Nov demonstrated peacefully in capital Amman demanding Israel release two Jordanian citizens it detained in Aug and Sept. After Jordan late Oct recalled its ambassador in protest against Israel's detainment of its citizens, Israel 6 Nov released Jordanian detainees and Jordanian ambassador returned to Israel 12 Nov. UN 15 Nov extended until 2023 mandate of UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA). King Abdullah II 21 Nov said Jordan-Israel relations at "an all-time low".

➔ **Lebanon** Following govt's resignation late Oct, anti-govt protests continued across Lebanon. Protesters demanded new govt independent from ruling political class to address economic crisis and widespread corruption. President Aoun's 12 Nov speech, in which he indicated that formation of new govt could be further delayed, provoked public outrage and sparked new wave of demonstrations in capital Beirut and across country. Soldier attempting to disperse protesters later that day in Khaldah, 15km south of Beirut shot and killed one. Reports that major political parties had agreed that former finance minister Mohammed Safady would replace Hariri as PM prompted thousands to take to streets in Beirut and Tripoli rejecting Safady's

nomination on grounds that he is part of current ruling elite; Safady 16 Nov withdrew his candidacy. Hariri 26 Nov withdrew his candidacy for PM. Scuffles broke out in Beirut 19 Nov between police and protesters blocking MPs from reaching parliament to discuss law that could provide amnesty for range of offences including corruption and misuse of public funds; parliament later that day postponed parliamentary session indefinitely. Protesters clashed with supporters of Hizbollah and Shiite Amal Movement throughout country 24-26 Nov. Scuffles broke out in Beirut 26 Nov between supporters of Hizbollah and those of Christian party Lebanese Forces. Same day, confrontations broke out across Lebanon between protesters and supporters of President Aoun leaving dozens injured.

↓ **Syria** Fighting intensified in north west between rebels and Russian-backed govt forces, in north east fragile ceasefire between Turkey and Kurdish-led forces held as Russia increased its presence there, and Israel launched retaliatory strikes against Syrian and Iranian targets in south. In north west, Russian and govt forces continued offensive in rebel-held parts of Idlib province killing over 50 civilians; govt airstrike on displaced persons' camp in Qah 20 Nov killed at least fifteen civilians. Fighting between Russian-backed govt forces and rebels in south east Idlib province 30 Nov left almost 100 combatants dead from both sides in most intense fighting since Aug ceasefire agreement. Protests erupted in Idlib 2 Nov over rise in fuel prices and electricity shortages; protesters also demonstrated against ties between region's self-proclaimed National Salvation Govt and jihadist group Hei'at Tahrir al-Sham. In north east, following incursion in Oct, Turkey limited its military operation against Kurdish-led People's Protection Units (YPG) and carried out joint patrols with Russian forces in safe zone agreed with Russia in Oct. Russia increased its military presence in north east, 18 Nov claimed to have taken control of former U.S. military base near Sarrin, north east of Aleppo following U.S. withdrawal in Oct. Syrian govt forces exchanged artillery fire with Turkey's Syrian proxies near Tel Abyad in safe zone and 19 Nov carried out first joint patrol with Russian troops between Tel Tamer and Abu Rasin in Hasakah governorate. Car bombing 26 Nov killed dozens in Turkish-controlled Tel Halaf near Ras al-Ayn; Turkey blamed YPG. In east, U.S. forces 22 Nov carried out first major operation against ISIS in Deir al-Zour province since 7 Oct withdrawal from north east. Israel night of 17-18 Nov struck Iran-backed convoy near Palmyra and Iranian official in Hama; 19 Nov intercepted four rockets suspected Iranian-backed forces launched from Syria into Israeli-controlled Golan Heights. In retaliation, Israel next day struck over twenty Syrian and Iranian targets reportedly killing at least 23.

Gulf and Arabian Peninsula

➔ **Bahrain** Govt sent players to Gulf Cup football tournament in Qatar to run 24 Nov-8 Dec, which it had previously planned to boycott.

↓ **Iran** Violent crackdown on protests over rise in fuel prices led to deaths of over 100 demonstrators and govt further breached 2015 nuclear deal. Govt raised fuel prices 15 Nov sparking protests nationwide, which security forces sought to disperse forcibly; NGO Amnesty International 29 Nov reported deaths of at least 161 protesters. U.S. 22 Nov sanctioned Iran information minister following internet blackout

during protests. President Rouhani 5 Nov announced Iran was going ahead with further violation of nuclear deal, Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), by re-summing uranium enrichment at Fordow nuclear facility. European parties to JCPOA (France, UK and Germany) and EU 11 Nov raised possibility of invoking agreement's dispute resolution mechanism. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) 7 Nov claimed Iran had temporarily prevented one of its inspectors from leaving country. IAEA 17 Nov affirmed Iran had accumulated more heavy water than JCPOA's 130 tonne limit. U.S. Treasury Department 4 Nov imposed sanctions on Iranian armed forces general staff and nine individuals associated with Supreme Leader Khamenei including his son and Iran's judiciary chief. Govt 8 Nov said it had intercepted drone in south west without commenting on its provenance.

↓ 🇮🇶* **Iraq** Security forces continued to brutally suppress protests against ruling elite leaving over 100 dead, pushing toll since early Oct over 400, and PM Mahdi resigned; political vacuum could lead to greater unrest in Dec. President Salih late Oct said PM Mahdi was willing to step down if largest political blocs could agree on his replacement and promised electoral reform and early elections; protesters continued to call for overhaul of political system. UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) 10 Nov proposed roadmap to resolve crisis including release of detained protesters, investigation into enforced disappearances and use of excessive force against protesters, and electoral reforms. Top Shiite cleric Ali al-Sistani 11 Nov expressed support for UN's proposals and said protesters should continue until govt meets their demands. Several political parties 18 Nov agreed to give Mahdi 45 days to implement reforms while threatening to withdraw support for his govt and call for early elections if he fails. Protesters 27 Nov burned down Iranian consulate in Najaf; Iran condemned attack and called on Iraq to take action against perpetrators. Security forces 28 Nov killed at least 44 protesters in Najaf and Nasiriya. After al-Sistani 29 Nov called on parliament to retract its support for govt, Mahdi same day said he would resign in bid to calm protesters. Unidentified assailants 8 Nov fired seventeen rockets at military base housing U.S. troops in Nineveh province in north west; no casualties reported. In Kirkuk province in north, roadside bombing 10 Nov seriously injured five Italian soldiers deployed to train Iraqi forces. Clashes between security forces and Islamic State (ISIS) 1-29 Nov left at least twenty militants and seven security force members dead in several provinces. In north, Turkey continued its air campaign against Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) including 20 Nov raid that left at least ten dead in Haftanin. Kurdistan Regional Govt (KRG) and federal govt 25 Nov reached preliminary oil-sharing agreement.

➡ **Kuwait** Protesters 6 Nov demonstrated in front of parliament over corruption in govt and demanded resignation of parliament speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim. Govt resigned 14 Nov after legislators submitted motion for no-confidence vote against interior minister over alleged abuse of power. Emir 19 Nov announced appointment of FM Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Sabah as new PM and tasked him with forming new govt. Govt 22 Nov declared willingness to host UN-sponsored peace talks between Saudi-backed Yemeni govt and Huthi rebels.

➡ **Qatar** Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain sent players to Gulf Cup football tournament in Qatar to run 24 Nov-8 Dec, which they had previously planned to boycott. In further sign of possible thawing relations, Emir Al-Thani

15 Nov offered condolences to UAE after death of Sheikh Sultan, second son of country's founder Sheikh Zayed. During visit to Qatar, Turkish President Erdoğan 25 Nov announced completion of Turkish military base there.

➡ **Saudi Arabia** Govt reduced airstrikes in Huthi-controlled areas in Yemen and mediated signing of agreement between Yemeni govt and southern separatists, also took limited steps toward reducing tensions with Qatar. Huthi forces in Yemen continued to refrain from further strikes into Saudi Arabia as indirect talks continued and UN Envoy Martin Griffiths 22 Nov reported 80% reduction in Saudi airstrikes in Yemen in previous two weeks. Huthi forces 17 Nov seized one Saudi and two South Korean vessels off Yemeni coast; 19 Nov announced release of vessels and crews. In response to Huthi strikes on coalition locations in Mokha 24 Nov, Saudi-led coalition airstrikes in Ras Isa port in Hodeida province 25 Nov killed unknown number of Huthis. Saudi-led coalition 26 Nov said it was releasing 200 Huthi prisoners and reducing restrictions on Yemeni air space to enable medical evacuations from Huthi-controlled capital Sanaa; International Committee of the Red Cross 28 Nov announced successful repatriation of 128 Huthi detainees from Saudi Arabia to Sanaa. Following Saudi-led mediation between Yemeni govt and United Arab Emirates (UAE)-backed southern separatists, two sides signed Riyadh Agreement in Saudi capital 5 Nov; after signing ceremony Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said agreement "will open ... broader talks between Yemeni parties to reach a political solution and end the war". Following UAE's complete withdrawal from Aden late Oct, several thousand Saudi troops entered city, taking control of main coalition base, Aden port and airport. Govt sent players to Gulf Cup football tournament in Qatar to run 24 Nov-8 Dec, which it had previously planned to boycott. Saudi Aramco oil and gas company 3 Nov said it would go ahead with initial public offering in Dec with company valued at estimated \$1.6-\$1.7 trillion.

➡ **United Arab Emirates** Following Saudi-mediated negotiations, UAE-backed Yemeni southern separatist group Southern Transitional Council 5 Nov signed agreement with Yemeni govt to end hostilities in south. Govt sent players to Gulf Cup football tournament in Qatar to run 24 Nov-8 Dec, which it had previously planned to boycott.

⬆ **Yemen** Yemeni govt and southern separatists signed agreement to end hostilities in south and Saudis reduced airstrikes in Huthi-controlled areas. Yemeni govt 5 Nov signed Riyadh Agreement with southern separatist group Southern Transitional Council (STC) following Saudi-led mediation; agreement provides 90-day timeline for formation of new cabinet with equal representation of northerners and southerners, implementation of political and security arrangements across south, and STC representation in future UN-led peace talks with Huthis. Parties missed deadlines to carry out initial steps including appointment of new governor and security chief in Aden as well as withdrawal of govt and STC forces from front lines across south. Limited clashes erupted in Aden 18 Nov between STC-affiliated forces and unidentified assailants. Saudi military operations against Iran-aligned Huthi rebels continued to decline as indirect talks continued. UN Envoy Martin Griffiths 22 Nov announced 80% fall in Saudi airstrikes in preceding two weeks. In response to Huthi strikes on coalition locations in Mokha 24 Nov, Saudi-led coalition airstrikes 25 Nov killed unknown number of Huthi rebels in Ras Isa port in Hodeida province; clashes

followed between Huthis and govt forces around Hodeida. Huthis continued to refrain from strikes into Saudi Arabia but launched missile attacks inside Yemen, in Mokha and Mareb governorates. Huthi forces 17 Nov seized one Saudi and two South Korean vessels in Red Sea; 19 Nov released crews and vessels. Huthis 29 Nov claimed to have killed two Saudi pilots in attack on Saudi helicopter near border. Saudi-led coalition 26 Nov said it was releasing 200 Huthi prisoners and reducing restrictions on Yemeni airspace to enable medical evacuations from Huthi-controlled capital Sanaa; International Committee of the Red Cross 28 Nov announced successful repatriation of 128 Huthi detainees from Saudi Arabia. Kuwait 22 Nov declared willingness to host UN-sponsored peace talks.

North Africa

↓ **Algeria** Protesters intensified calls on govt to cancel presidential election planned for 12 Dec, and security forces hardened crackdown. Protests against ruling elite and planned poll continued in capital Algiers twice a week. Number of protesters rose markedly 1 Nov, marking 65th anniversary of beginning of independence war against France; hundreds of thousands gathered in Algiers from across country calling for “new independence” and removal of army chief of staff Gaïd Salah. Hundreds marched in Algiers night of 20-21 Nov against election; security forces arrested dozens and magistrate 21 Nov charged 29 people for holding unauthorised gathering. Security forces 29 Nov arrested at least 25 in Algiers shortly before new demonstration against presidential election. Campaign started officially 17 Nov; protesters heckled several gatherings. In Tlemcen in north, security forces 17 Nov arrested 37 people trying to disrupt rally organised by presidential candidate and former PM Ali Benflis; court next day sentenced four to eighteen months in prison. In Tiaret in west, security forces 21 Nov arrested 25 people disrupting another of Benflis’s rallies. As political instability continued to harm economy, parliament 14 Nov passed bill intended to facilitate foreign investment in oil sector despite protests against it in Oct.

➡ **Egypt** Following late Sept anti-regime protests, govt continued to take measures to ease economic pressure on citizens, jihadist insurgency continued in Sinai, and govt committed to further talks with Ethiopia and Sudan over Nile waters. Govt 16 Nov announced further cuts to prices of certain foods effective from 1 Dec. Cabinet 13 Nov approved amnesty for unspecified number of prisoners effective 25 Jan. Police 23 Nov arrested senior editor of independent news outlet Mada Masr in Cairo after it published report on President Sisi’s son; 24 Nov raided Mada Masr’s Cairo HQ, arrested three journalists; all four journalists reportedly released 24 Nov. Police 26 Nov arrested three more journalists in Cairo. In Sinai, jihadist attacks and counter-terrorism operations continued. Islamic State (ISIS)-Sinai Province 2 Nov pledged allegiance to new ISIS leader Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Quraishi. ISIS claimed roadside bomb that hit army vehicle 20 Nov in Sheikh Zuweid, one officer killed. Military 4 Nov said they had killed 83 suspected militants in north and central Sinai in Oct. Russian defence minister Sergei Shoigu met Sisi in Cairo 12 Nov to discuss Egypt’s possible purchase of Russian fighter jets. U.S. 18 Nov warned govt that buying Russian fighter jets could lead to U.S. sanctions, including ban on future purchases of American weapons. After U.S. hosted talks between Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan over Ethiopia’s construction of its Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on

River Nile, parties agreed to hold four meetings among water ministers in bid to resolve dispute by 15 Jan.

➡ **Libya** Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA) kept up its offensive to take capital Tripoli from UN-backed Govt of National Accord (GNA) as UN-led efforts to promote ceasefire faltered. LNA deployed more military personnel, reportedly including Russian military aides, to Tripoli front lines from rear bases in east. LNA airstrike 3 Nov hit Tripoli's Mitiga airport, closed since Sept; LNA early Nov upped airstrikes in southern Salaheddin neighbourhood, forcing GNA to retreat toward city centre; LNA 19 Nov shelled areas in city centre near oil and gas storage tanks; LNA 18 Nov hit factory in southern Wadi Rabia neighbourhood, killing at least ten including foreign workers. LNA also targeted GNA bases and ammunition depots in other regions: LNA hit Misrata airport and weapons storage depot in residential area in Misrata 19 Nov; 14 Nov hit Sirte airport; 28 Nov LNA struck Tebu armed groups loyal to GNA after latter previous day tried to take over al-Feel oil site in south. GNA tried to drum up international support: following interior and foreign ministers' visit to Washington DC mid-Nov, U.S. State Department issued its strongest statement yet against LNA offensive, also condemning "Russia's attempts to exploit the conflict". GNA and Turkey 26 Nov signed security deal and agreement on reciprocal jurisdiction over Mediterranean waters that inflamed tensions with Greece and Egypt. As a result, UN-backed initiative aimed at pushing two sides' foreign backers to support ceasefire and commit to stop funnelling weapons to Libyan allies faltered. Libyan parties continued to disagree on ceasefire conditions.

➡ **Morocco** Security forces 17 Nov arrested two individuals suspected of links to Islamic State (ISIS) in capital Rabat. Appeals court in Rabat 30 Oct confirmed death sentences for three main suspects in killing of two female Scandinavian tourists near Imlil village in Atlas Mountains in Dec 2018 and sentenced fourth one, originally sentenced to life imprisonment, to death.

➡ **Tunisia** Following legislative elections in Oct, new parliament 13 Nov elected Rached Ghannouchi, president of Islamist-inspired party An-Nahda, as speaker. An-Nahda, exercising its right as winner of most seats in Oct legislative polls, 15 Nov nominated former agriculture secretary of state, Habib Jemli, as PM and President Saïed same day tasked him with forming govt.

➡ **Western Sahara** After UN Security Council 30 Oct renewed mandate of UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) for twelve months, Polisario Front independence movement expressed disappointment, calling move "serious blow to the political momentum that the Security Council built and maintained over the past eighteen months", and threatened to "reconsider its engagement in the UN peace process".